

**From:** Barresi, Vince [mailto:VBarresi@nebraska.tv]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 1:57 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin  
**Cc:** Pappas, Peter  
**Subject:** Viewability

FILED/ACCEPTED

SEP - 7 2007

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Martin

I am the General Manager of Pappas Telecasting's Stations KHGI and KWNB, the ABC affiliates in Central Nebraska.

I believe that it is imperative that the Commission put cable subscribers first when it adopts its DTV Carriage Rules next Tuesday, and am writing to express my strong support for the Commission's "viewability" proposals.

The FCC must act to ensure that cable subscribers are not disenfranchised by the switch to digital-only broadcasting in February 2009. Therefore, we support the Commission's proposal to require cable operators to choose between (a) downconverting the digital must-carry channels and carrying both the digital and analog signals for these channels and (b) carrying the local must-carry signals in digital only and providing the necessary equipment to ensure that all subscribers can view those signals. The "viewability" proposal outlined above will promote Congress's goal of ensuring that the DTV transition is completed smoothly and in a manner that benefits consumers.

We also support the Commission's pro-consumer extension of the signal degradation rules to digital carriage, and believe that the Commission's proposal in this regard will ensure that every cable customer receives the full benefits of digital television.

Many thanks for all of your efforts to ensure a smooth DTV transition for all television viewers.

Sincerely,

Vincent F. Barresi  
General Manager

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**From:** Wyatt, Andrew [mailto:AWyatt@kswt.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 2:00 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin  
**Subject:** DTV Carriage Rules

**FILED/ACCEPTED**  
**SEP - 7 2007**  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am the General Manager of Pappas Telecasting's Station KSWT, the CBS and CW affiliates in Yuma, AZ – El Centro, CA.

I believe that it is imperative that the Commission put cable subscribers first when it adopts its DTV carriage rules next Tuesday, and am writing to express my strong support for the Commission's "viewability" proposals.

The FCC must act to ensure that cable subscribers are not disenfranchised by the switch to digital-only broadcasting in February 2009. Therefore, we support the Commission's proposal to require cable operators to choose between (a) downconverting the digital must-carry channels and carrying both the digital and analog signals for these channels and (b) carrying the local must-carry signals in digital only and providing the necessary equipment to ensure that all subscribers can view those signals. The "viewability" proposal outlined above will promote Congress's goal of ensuring that the DTV transition is completed smoothly and in a manner that benefits consumers.

We also support the Commission's pro-consumer extension of the signal degradation rules to digital carriage, and believe that the Commission's proposal in this regard will ensure that every cable customer receives the full benefits of digital television.

Many thanks for all of your efforts to ensure a smooth DTV transition for all television viewers.

Sincerely,

Andrew Wyatt  
General Manager/General Sales Manager  
KSWT News 13 / 13.2 the CW  
Direct 928-782-5113 ext. 11  
Cell 928-246-1181  
Fax 928-782-7847

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**From:** Brad Van Sluyters [mailto:bvs@wluctv6.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 2:40 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin  
**Subject:** Cable TV Viewability Proposal

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SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Martin,

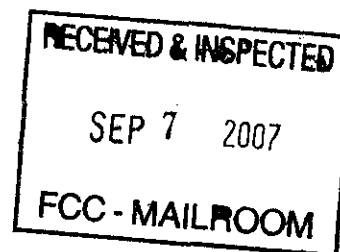
The intent of this e-mail is to further emphasize how important the Cable TV Viewability Proposal is to the American consumer, our viewers. In small markets, like the one that WLUC provides a signal to, every home needs to be protected from the loss of service, and that means analog as well as a digital signal. Many homes in our area will need to be able to view our analog signal. WLUC, a Barrington Broadcasting Company station, has invested huge sums of money to assure our viewers will receive a clean clear digital product. We need your support to assure our viewers that they will be protected from material degradation so that they can reap the full benefits of HDTV.

We support the Cable TV Viewability Proposal as the only way to guarantee that analog cable subscribers will not be disenfranchised after the DTV transition. Also, it is imperative that TV signals be protected from material degradation so that consumers can reap the full benefits of HDTV.

Sincerely,

Brad Van Sluyters  
VP/General Manager  
WLUC-TV  
Marquette, MI

September 5, 2007



Chairman Kevin J. Martin  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Washington, DC 20554

Re: WC Docket No. 06-147; Frontier Communications Petition for Forbearance from  
Title II and Computer Inquiry Requirements for Broadband Services

Dear Chairman Martin:

I wanted to contact you regarding Frontier Communications' petition regarding the above mentioned docket in which we are seeking regulatory forbearance for our company's commercial broadband transmission services and strongly urge you to grant this petition. Providing Frontier with regulatory relief, which is similar to that already provided to Verizon, will permit the consumers in our markets to have the ability to enjoy benefits of a truly competitive broadband market and removes the shackles of pricing regulation. Granting Frontier's petition for forbearance is a natural progression of broadband deregulation and is in the public interest.

Frontier is not the dominant broadband provider in any of the relevant markets in terms of addressable market share. Frontier faces competition in its serving areas from alternative facilities-based, broadband competitors as well as providers that purchase special access DS1 or DS3 services from Frontier. The companies, in turn, bundle broadband services, such as Ethernet service, to the customer over those connections. In many cases these are cable television operators or national telecommunications providers who have access to financial resources many times greater than Frontier. The fact that there is less regulation on these entities provides advantages to competitors with greater resources than Frontier in the largest growth area in our industry, broadband.

The Commission should have no concern about granting Frontier this regulatory relief based upon the competitive and consumer success realized from the deregulation of the broadband Internet access market. Obviously, the requested additional forbearance in the commercial broadband service market would only serve to bring additional market-based competition to the benefit of all customers. If the public interest is truly the key element to the approval of any forbearance request, then granting Frontier's petition will serve to benefit communities by accelerating competition and the deployment of advanced broadband technology in its markets.

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If you have any questions regarding the positions asserted by Frontier or regarding the subsequent data filed with the Commission last week, please do not hesitate to give me a call. Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Maggie Wilderotter  
Chairman & CEO

**From:** Drake, Rosalie [mailto:RDrake@wcwg20.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 2:46 PM

**To:** Kevin Martin

**Subject:** DTV Carriage "Viewability" Rules

FILED/ACCEPTED  
SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Chairman Martin

I am the General Manager of Pappas Telecasting's Station WCWG, the CW affiliate in Greensboro, N.C.

I believe that it is imperative that the Commission put cable subscribers first when it adopts its DTV carriage rules next Tuesday, and am writing to express my strong support for the Commission's "viewability" proposals.

The FCC must act to ensure that cable subscribers are not disenfranchised by the switch to digital-only broadcasting in February 2009. Therefore, we support the Commission's proposal to require cable operators to choose between (a) downconverting the digital must-carry channels and carrying both the digital and analog signals for these channels and (b) carrying the local must-carry signals in digital only and providing the necessary equipment to ensure that all subscribers can view those signals. The "viewability" proposal outlined above will promote Congress's goal of ensuring that the DTV transition is completed smoothly and in a manner that benefits consumers.

We also support the Commission's pro-consumer extension of the signal degradation rules to digital carriage, and believe that the Commission's proposal in this regard will ensure that every cable customer receives the full benefits of digital television.

Many thanks for all of your efforts to ensure a smooth DTV transition for all television viewers.

Sincerely,

*Rosalie Drake*

General Manager  
WCWG 20  
622-G Guilford College Rd.  
Greensboro, NC 27409  
336-510-2020

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**From:** bfarris [mailto:bfarris@krcg.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 3:22 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin; Michael Copps; Deborah Tate; Robert McDowell  
**Subject:** The Cable TV Viewability Proposal - DTV Carriage Order

**FILED/ACCEPTED**  
**SEP - 7 2007**  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Honorable Chairman and Commissioners,

We would like to express our support for the cable TV Viewability Proposal – this is such an important order for our American consumers. It will protect analog cable subscribers from loss of service after February 17, 2009 – and will ensure that digital television (DTV) Signals will not suffer material degradation when carried on cable systems.

As a local CBS television affiliate, serving the capital city in the state of Missouri – it is important to be able to continue to reach our viewing audience and the fine citizens in the heart of Missouri. We want the consumers to be able to reap the full benefits of HDTV, and guarantee that analog cable subscribers will not be disenfranchised after the DTV transition.

Thank-you for your support in the crucial matter.

**Betsy Farris**  
Vice-President/General Manager  
KRCG-TV and krcg online  
KRCG13 eYellow Pages  
573.694.3333

**From:** bfarris [mailto:bfarris@krcg.com]

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 3:11 PM

**To:** The Media Department; The Media Department; Jonathan Adelstein; Kevin Martin; Robert McDowell

**Subject:** The Cable TV Viewability Proposal - DTV Carriage Order

Honorable Chairman and Commissioners,

We would like to express our support for the Cable TV Viewability Proposal – this is such an important order for our American consumers.

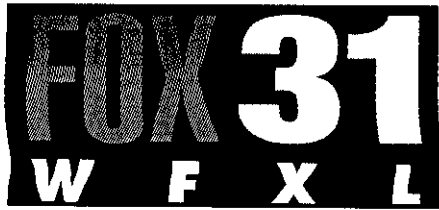
It will protect analog cable subscribers from loss of service after February 17, 2009 – and will ensure that digital television (DTV) signals will not suffer material degradation when carried on cable systems.

As a local CBS television affiliate, serving the capital city in the State of Missouri – it is important to be able to continue to reach our viewing audience and the fine citizens in the heart of Missouri. We want the consumers to be able to reap the full benefits of HDTV, and guarantee that analog cable subscribers will not be disenfranchised after the DTV transition.

Thank-you for your support in the crucial matter.

**Betsy Farris**  
Vice-President/General Manager  
KRCG-TV and krcg online  
KRCG13 eYellow Pages  
573.694.3333

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**SEP - 7 2007**  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary



WFXL31 WFXL DT ALBANY GEORGIA

September 5, 2007

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

FILED/ACCEPTED  
SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Sir,

In reference to the DTV Carriage Order that will be on the agenda of the September 11 FCC open meeting I want to express my support of the Cable TV Viewability Proposal. The adoption of this proposal is the only way to guarantee that analog cable subscribers will not be disenfranchised after the DTV transition. Furthermore, our TV signals must be protected from material degradation so that consumers can reap the full benefits of HDTV. This is a very important order for American consumers – my viewers.

Regards,

Jenny Collins  
Vice President General Manager  
WFXL FOX 31  
Albany, Georgia

1201 Stuart Avenue • Albany, GA 31707  
Phone: 229.435.3100 • Fax: 229.903.8241  
Toll Free -800-284-5501 • [www.wfxl.com](http://www.wfxl.com)

**From:** Eymer, Scott [mailto:seymer@kpth.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 4:21 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin  
**Cc:** Pappas, Peter  
**Subject:** DTV Carriage "Viewability" Rules

FILED/ACCEPTED  
SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman  
Dear Chairman Martin,

I am the General Manager of Pappas Telecasting's Station KPTH, the FOX affiliate in Sioux City, Iowa.

I believe that it is imperative that the Commission put cable subscribers first when it adopts its DTV carriage rules next Tuesday, and am writing to express my strong support for the Commission's "viewability" proposals.

The FCC must act to ensure that cable subscribers are not disenfranchised by the switch to digital-only broadcasting in February 2009. Therefore, we support the Commission's proposal to require cable operators to choose between (a) downconverting the digital must-carry channels and carrying both the digital and analog signals for these channels and (b) carrying the local must-carry signals in digital only and providing the necessary equipment to ensure that all subscribers can view those signals. The "viewability" proposal outlined above will promote Congress's goal of ensuring that the DTV transition is completed smoothly and in a manner that benefits consumers.

We also support the Commission's pro-consumer extension of the signal degradation rules to digital carriage, and believe that the Commission's proposal in this regard will ensure that every cable customer receives the full benefits of digital television.

Many thanks for all of your efforts to ensure a smooth DTV transition for all television viewers.

Sincerely,

Scott Eymer  
General Manager  
Pappas Telecasting of Siouxland

KPTH FOX 44  
My 44.2 KPTH-DT "My Network TV"

100 Gold Circle  
Dakota Dunes SD 57049

phone 712-277-3554 fax 712-258-6043 cell 712-212-1152

[seymer@kpth.com](mailto:seymer@kpth.com)

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SEP - 7 2007

Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

**From:** Lipps, Rick [mailto:rlipps@nbc24.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 4:20 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin  
**Subject:** Cable TV Viewability Proposal

As a General Manager of a local Television station, I am both a provider and consumer of our product. Over the last decade or more, we have seen lots of developments in cell phone technology, cable television products, and other distribution systems. In spite of this more people still turn to local TV as their source for News, information, and entertainment than ever before.

The transition to Digital signals and HDTV has been very cumbersome and expensive for Broadcasters. Just as the big Networks rely on local affiliates to distribute their signal, we rely on cable systems to continue that distribution along with the addition of local News and other programming downstream. Broadcasters, Networks, Producers, etc. have spent many millions of dollars converting equipment and product for the digital and High Definition transition. If we allow cable companies to become the "weak link" in the chain, the consumers will never get the full benefit that was originally envisioned and is currently available all the way to the cable head end.

The FCC will consider the "Cable TV Viewability Proposal" during its open meeting on September 11<sup>th</sup>. This proposal will protect analog cable subscribers from loss of service and ensure that our signal can reach our consumers with the same high quality value and benefit that it started with.

On behalf of our viewers, your consideration of a positive consumer driven proposal is appreciated. I would be happy to discuss this with you or any member of your staff at your convenience.

Rick Lipps  
General Manager  
NBC 24 - WNWO/WNWO-DT  
FAIR, ACCURATE, HONEST  
PH: 1-419-531-0044

September 4, 2007

FCC Commissioner Kevin Martin

FILED/ACCEPTED  
SEP - 7 2007Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary**Re: FCC Chairman Kevin Martin's Proposed Triple Carriage Must-Carry Order**

Dear Mr. Martin:

Members of the American Cable Association (ACA) and the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) are small and medium-sized cable operators with a long history of providing high-quality, innovative video service to their communities. These cable operators who provide service to smaller and rural markets are currently making significant investments in their facilities to offer more services to consumers, including high-definition digital programming and video on demand. In addition, these operators are launching advanced services, such as broadband and voice, providing rural consumers with the much-touted "Triple Play." Small and medium-sized cable operators understand that to remain competitive, they must offer consumers a robust service.

However, the Associations and their members are gravely concerned about the digital television carriage order. The draft order would require cable operators after February 17, 2009 to carry one signal of each broadcaster in three different formats: high definition, standard definition and analog. It is both fiscally and technologically infeasible for all small and medium-sized operators to meet such a burdensome obligation. The upgrade costs required to comply with this mandate are substantial -- upwards of several hundred dollars per subscriber in small markets. Further, many small cable operators simply lack the capacity to offer all broadcast stations in all three formats, and it is not feasible for small cable operators to upgrade their facilities to all-digital and provide set-top boxes to all of their subscribers.

In some cases, the triple-carriage requirement would force operators of small systems to remove existing channels from their channel lineup, or reduce the amount of bandwidth available for broadband and voice services, further broadening the digital divide between urban and rural consumers. In other cases, operator would be compelled to shut down their systems altogether, removing a vital video and voice competitor in the market, and eliminating access to any broadband service for some consumers.

The digital television triple-carriage order must be rejected in order to not harm rural consumers and the companies that serve them. The Associations and their community-based members, along with the millions of subscribers they serve, are hopeful that you and your policymaking colleagues at the FCC recognize the need for sensible regulation that will accomplish the goals of the digital transition without compromising the quality video and broadband service rural consumers enjoy and have come to expect from their providers.

Sincerely,



Robert G. Adams  
General Manager



TELEPHONE LONG DISTANCE  
INTERNET CELLULAR TELEVISION





FILED/ACCEPTED  
SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

September 6, 2007

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I would like to respectfully address an issue which will come to your attention on September 11, 2007. It is of supreme importance to all Americans regarding how they receive their television signals.

The **CableTV Viewability Proposal** will protect analog cable subscribers from loss of service after February 17, 2009. It will also ensure the signal will be of a quality nature and not downgraded. This is a base line right of retransmission of the signals broadcasters own.

I ask that you vote in support of the **CableTV Viewability Proposal**.

Most Sincerely,



Michael J. Hayes  
President & General Manager  
WYFF 4

WYFF4.COM

505 RUTHERFORD STREET • GREENVILLE SC 29609 • PH 864.242.4404 • FAX 864.240.5329

**Hearst-Argyle**  
TELEVISION, INC.



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SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Harry J. Pappas  
CHAIRMAN /  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

September 6, 2007

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington DC 20554

Dear Chairman Martin:

I am writing to you on a matter of urgent concern to the future of broadcasting. I believe that it is imperative that the Commission put cable subscribers first when it adopts its DTV carriage rules next Tuesday, and am writing to express my strong support for the Commission's "viewability" proposals.

The FCC must act to ensure that cable subscribers are not disenfranchised by the switch to digital-only broadcasting in February 2009. Therefore, we support the Commission's proposal to require cable operators to choose between (a) down converting the digital must-carry channels and carrying both the digital and analog signals for these channels and (b) carrying the local must-carry signals in digital only and providing the necessary equipment to ensure that all subscribers can view those signals. The "viewability" proposal outlined will promote Congress's goal of ensuring that the DTV transition is completed smoothly and in a manner that benefits consumers.

We also support the Commission's pro-consumer extension of the signal degradation rules to digital carriage, and believe that the Commission's proposal in this regard will ensure that every cable customer receives the full benefits of digital television.

Many thanks for your many efforts to ensure a smooth DTV transition for all television viewers, and for your leadership on this issue.

Sincerely,

Harry J. Pappas



NEW VISION TELEVISION

Los Angeles • Atlanta

Jason Elkin  
Chairman/Chief Executive Officer

September 5, 2007

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20554

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SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Mr. Commissioners,

I am writing this letter to show my support for the Cable Television Viewability Proposal. This proposal is the only way to guarantee that analog cable subscribers will not be disenfranchised after the DTV conversion. This is a matter of extreme importance to our viewers the American consumer. Television signals must be protected from material degradation. With out protection it will be impossible for television viewers to take full advantage of the high-definition television.

Please consider supporting the Cable Television Viewability Proposal. In my opinion and the opinion of many of my peers it provides needed protection and ensures the American consumer will be able to take full advantage of the new technologies offered in the upcoming DTV conversion.

Sincerely,

Jason Elkin  
Chairman, CEO New Vision Television

**From:** Debra Fraser [mailto:dcfraser@pacbell.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 06, 2007 3:26 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin  
**Subject:** KTLN TV Supports CableTV Viewability Proposal

Also digital must carry for the entire digital spectrum.

Debbie Fraser  
General Manager  
KTLN TV  
[www.ktln.tv](http://www.ktln.tv)



Thomas E. Mac Arthur  
WPFO FOX23  
233 Oxford Street  
Suite 35  
Portland, ME 04101  
(207)-347-7309

FILED/ACCEPTED  
SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

September 6, 2007

Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear FCC Commissioners:

After reading the CableTV Viewability Proposal, I am writing to you in support of the proposal. This is the only way to guarantee that analog cable subscribers will not be disenfranchised after the DTV transition.

TV signals must be protected from material degradation so that consumers can reap the full benefits of HDTV.

Sincerely,

Thomas E. Mac Arthur

TEM/dlh

C: The Honorable Kevin J. Martin, Chairman (via email)  
The Honorable Michael J. Copps, Commissioner (via email)  
The Honorable Jonathan S. Adelstein, Commissioner (via email)  
The Honorable Deborah Taylor Tate, Commissioner (via email)  
The Honorable Robert M. McDowell, Commissioner (via email)  
Marsha MacBride, Exec. VP, Legal & Regulatory Affairs, NAB  
(via email)

**WPFO-TV**

T: 207.828.0023 • F: 207.347.7323  
233 Oxford Street, Suite 35 • Portland, ME 04101  
myFOXMaine.com

# **MAX MEDIA MONTANA**

September 6, 2007

The Honorable Kevin J. Martin  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20554

**FILED/ACCEPTED**  
**SEP - 7 2007**  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

Dear Commissioner Martin:

After reading the Cable TV Viewability Proposal, I am writing to you in support of the proposal. This is the only way to guarantee that analog cable subscribers will not be disenfranchised after the DTV transition.

TV signals must be protected from material degradation so that consumers can reap the full benefits of HDTV.

Sincerely,

*Linda Gray via Fax*

Linda Gray  
President/General Manager

**2200 Stephens Avenue • Missoula, Montana 59801 • 406.542.8900**

**KULR-NBC8 KTMF-ABC23/42 KFBB-ABC5 KHBB-ABC21 KWYB-ABC18/28**  
**Billings Missoula/Kalispell Great Falls Helena Butte/Bozeman**

From: Lester Langley [mailto:llangley@lwcpafirm.com]  
Sent: Wednesday, September 05, 2007 3:34 PM  
To: Kevin Martin  
Subject: CableTV Viewability Proposal

Chairman Martin-

As a small broadcaster, I want to express our support for the Viewability Proposal to keep from disenfranchising our local analog cable subscribers after the DTV transition. This is the only way to keep viewers who only have analog sets from losing our local signals.

Thank you in advance for your support on this issue.

Lester Langley  
CFO  
National Communications, LLC  
Blue Bonnet Communications, Inc.

Langley Williams & Company, LLC  
205 W. College St.  
Lake Charles, LA 70605  
337-477-2827 Ext. 16 (office)  
337-540-7762 (cell)  
337-478-8418 (fax)  
llangley@lwcpafirm.com

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SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

The opinions and conclusions contained in the memorandum are based in part on the completeness and accuracy of the above-stated facts and assumptions. If any of these facts and assumptions are not complete and accurate, please notify us immediately as we may have to materially modify the opinions and conclusions of this memorandum. We are relying upon the relevant provisions of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, the regulations thereunder, and judicial and administrative interpretations thereof, which exist at the date of this opinion. These provisions are subject to change or modification by subsequent legislative, regulatory, administrative or judicial actions or decisions. Any such changes could have a material effect on the opinions and conclusions of this letter.

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**From:** Paul Hoge [mailto:phoge@crosslake.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2007 3:31 PM  
**To:** Kevin Martin  
**Subject:** Triple-carriage requirement

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SEP - 7 2007  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary

September 5, 2007

Members of the American Cable Association (ACA) and the National Telecommunications Cooperative Association (NTCA) are small and medium-sized cable operators with a long history of providing high-quality, innovative video service to their communities. These cable operators who provide service to smaller and rural markets are currently making significant investments in their facilities to offer more services to consumers, including high-definition digital programming and video on demand. In addition, these operators are launching advanced services, such as broadband and voice, providing rural consumers with the much-touted "Triple Play." Small and medium-sized cable operators understand that to remain competitive, they must offer consumers a robust service.

However, the Associations and their members are gravely concerned about the digital television carriage order. The draft order would require cable operators after February 17, 2009 to carry one signal of each broadcaster in three different formats: high definition, standard definition and analog. It is both fiscally and technologically infeasible for all small and medium-sized operators to meet such a burdensome obligation. The upgrade costs required to comply with this mandate are substantial -- upwards of several hundred dollars per subscriber in small markets. Further, many small cable operators simply lack the capacity to offer all broadcast stations in all three formats, and it is not feasible for small cable operators to upgrade their facilities to all-digital and provide set-top boxes to all of their subscribers.

In some cases, the triple-carriage requirement would force operators of small systems to remove existing channels from their channel lineup, or reduce the amount of bandwidth available for broadband and voice services, further broadening the digital divide between urban and rural consumers. In other cases, operator would be compelled to shut down their systems altogether, removing a vital video and voice competitor in the market, and denying access to broadband services.

Rather than mandating triple carriage, the federal government should allow the marketplace to dictate which formats independent cable operators provide to their subscribers and the timetable for small operators to transition into all-digital services, among those that can do so. Letting the market work will ensure that consumers stay connected after the digital transition.

The digital television triple-carriage order must be rejected in order to not harm rural consumers and the companies that serve them. The Associations and their community-based members, along with the millions of subscribers they serve, are hopeful that you and your policymaking colleagues at the FCC recognize the need for sensible regulation that will accomplish the goals of the digital transition without compromising the quality video and broadband service rural consumers enjoy and have come to expect from their providers.

Sincerely,

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